

## **CLAIMS**

1. A chain-driving mechanism comprising:

a plurality of sprockets disposed in series;

5       an endless chain wound onto the plurality of sprockets in order to transmit a driving force given to at least one of the plurality of sprockets to the remaining sprockets and drive the remaining sprockets; and

10      a chain guide disposed adjacent to the chain so as to sandwich the chain from an outside of an outer periphery thereof.

2. The chain-driving mechanism as set forth in claim 1, wherein the plurality of sprockets are disposed so as to rotate around an axial line extending substantially horizontally, and  
15      the chain guide is disposed so as to sandwich the chain from an outside in upward and downward directions.

3. The chain-driving mechanism as set forth in claim 1,  
wherein the chain guide is made of a softer material than the  
20      chain.

4. A conveyor apparatus comprising:

a plurality of carriers arranged to convey objects to be

conveyed;

a driving mechanism that drives the plurality of carriers in conjunction with each other; and

5       a driving source that exerts a driving force onto the driving mechanism,

wherein the driving mechanism comprises:

a plurality of sprockets that are disposed in series and that rotate coaxially with and together with the plurality of carriers;

10       an endless chain wound onto the plurality of sprockets; and

      a chain guide disposed adjacent to the chain so as to sandwich the chain from an outside of an outer periphery thereof.

15       5. The conveyor apparatus as set forth in claim 4, wherein the plurality of carriers and the plurality of sprockets are disposed so as to rotate around an axial line extending substantially horizontally, and the chain guide is disposed so as to sandwich the chain from an outside in upward and downward 20 directions.

6. The conveyor apparatus as set forth in claim 4, wherein the chain guide is made of a softer material than the chain.

7. The conveyor apparatus as set forth in claim 4, wherein the chain guide is detachably attached to a frame supporting the plurality of carriers.